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**SUBJECT** The Functions, Security Measures, and Dissemination  
of the Proceedings of The Communist Party Congresses  
in the Soviet Union

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1. There are three primary functions of the Communist Party Congresses in the Soviet Union. The first is to parade the Party unity, strength, and loyalty to Stalin. This requires no special explanation, since such demonstrations of strength and unity are part and parcel of the Communist political system. The second function is to rubber-stamp the decisions of the Politburo. The necessity for this stems from the basic difference between personal dictatorships such as Hitler's and the Communist dictatorship. Stalin has to be considered as first priest and top official of the impersonal dictatorship of the Communist system. Thus, although there is almost a deification of Stalin, he never steps over the line of demarcation between an authority promoted and supported by the Party and an authority imposed by a personal, self-made dictator. Therefore, there is no dramatic, personal intervention or display of influence by Stalin. He covers himself with the mask of an executioner of the will of the Party, and therefore needs the rubber-stamp action by the Congress. The third and most important function is to inform the top delegates to the Congress of the coming changes and tactical zigzags in the policies and to prepare them for the task of carrying out the new propaganda line and practical decisions.
2. There are regular channels for keeping the local party bosses in line with the latest decisions of the Politburo. Some information is dispatched by the mail service of the MGB or coded wire service and radio messages. In the field of telephone communications, there are the "Kremlin Service" and the "MGB System" which have special cables from Moscow to all the capitals of the Union Republics and Oblast or Krai centers. In some cases, selected top officials are given personal briefings in Moscow. Yet, in cases of especially significant decisions

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which require much work and effort from the whole party system, the Party Congress is used as a medium for announcing instructions. The following instances give examples of this:

- a. In March 1939 at the 18th Party Congress, the delegates were told in general terms of the coming agreement with Hitler and instructed on the method of explaining the change from the struggle against Fascism and placing the blame for world conditions on the western democracies. The delegates were not given any details about the actual negotiations with the Germans, since some among them remained at a low level of ideological education and were not close to the party leadership.
  - 1) Stalin in his report gave the delegates some general ideas about the coming event. In the official record of the proceedings of the Congress, Stalin spoke about five to eight minutes on the subject of relations with Germany and the western democracies; but the confidential uncensored text of the minutes shows that this portion took at least 15 minutes to present. Stalin's main emphasis was on the necessity of provoking a war in the West in order to avoid the attack of the West against the Soviet Union, which would endanger the chances for world revolution. Germany was presented as the most suitable partner in this provocation.
  - 2) Zhdanov later instructed the delegates on how to explain the sudden change in the policy to the mass of party members and non-party people. This was necessary since in the USSR, where there is no open public opinion, the leaders are very responsive to every change in the mood of the population. They try to prevent unfavorable changes in this mood by influencing the people by means of a heavy propaganda barrage.
- b. Another instance was the 18th Party Conference of 1940. This was a type of interim congress officially called to discuss the State Plan for the year. The majority of the delegates were managers of industries and the transportation system. At this conference, detailed instructions relating to the conversion of the Soviet economy to a war footing were given to the delegates. The impression was given that this was a conference for mobilization of the country for war.

#### Security Measures Taken before and during the Congresses

3. The organizers of the Party Congresses must take great pains to insure that the normal proceedings are free from any oppositional disturbances and that the lives of Stalin and his consorts are not endangered. The first of these objectives is attained by means of preliminary steps dealing with the control exercised over the selection of delegates and guests. The lives of the Kremlin leaders are safeguarded at the Congress itself by special protective measures which supplement the usual police protection.
4. The "election" of a delegate to a Party Congress proceeds in the following way:
  - a. The Commission for Preparation of the Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party sends to the Central Committee and the Oblast Committees of the Party in each of the Union Republics a request for a certain number of delegates to be sent to Moscow for the Party Congress.
  - b. These lower committees discuss the list of candidates submitted to them by their local Commission for Preparation of the Congress and select candidates for the number of delegates' positions allotted to them. These candidates are picked from the ranks of the top Party, Secret Police, and Army bosses of the region. In addition, a few rank and file Communists are added as a sort of decoration to give a democratic touch to the selection. These are

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usually Stakhanovite or old long-time workers. Some persons are automatically included in the list of candidates. They are the Secretaries and some members of the Central Committee and the Oblast Committees; the chief of the local branch of the MGB and the MVD administration; the attorney general of the region and the commanding general of the garrison or military district. Along with these are some assistants or proteges of those mentioned above and also the most important managers of the local industries and transportation units.

- c. The list of proposed candidates is then sent to the Preparation Commission. There a new and very strict screening is originated with the help of the central archives of the Central Committee and the Control Commission and the archives of the central MGB. The whole life history of each candidate is scrutinized even though it has been done many times before. No persons with the following "defects" can be admitted to the Congress:
    - 1) Persons participating in the ranks of opposition to the Party.
    - 2) Persons who have been deprived of Party rights and privileges, or placed under observation.
    - 3) Persons belonging to other political parties in the past (a special authorization was required in the case of Vyshinskiy).
    - 4) Persons corresponding with foreign persons or having foreign personal acquaintances.
  - d. After this screening, the candidates who are cleared are "recommended" to the local party authorities as "suitable." These approved candidates are then presented to the party conferences which are held throughout the country for the purpose of "electing" delegates. The name of a candidate is given to the Secretary of the party unit which is to "elect" the delegate. The Secretary presents the biography of the candidate to the party unit meeting and tells them why he must be "honored" with election to the Party Congress. The vote is then taken, and the candidate is "elected" without further ado.
5. In order further to insure that the proceedings during the Party Congress will run smoothly and that disturbances will not occur, another precaution is taken. Anyone who wishes to have a word in the "debates," that is, to deliver a prepared speech eulogizing Stalin, the Party, or the State, must register with the Secretariat and submit the text of his speech 24 hours in advance. No impromptu speeches or deviations from the prepared texts are permitted. This assures Stalin that there will be no more tumultuous scenes and dramatic interventions such as marked the Party Congresses of the early twenties.
  6. Special precautions are taken to prevent an attempt against the life of Stalin and other members of the Politburo. Since the time of the discovery in the Moscow Malyi Theater of a mine gallery under the box where Stalin usually sits when attending the performances, the decision was made to hold Party Congresses and Conferences inside the Kremlin. The 18th Party Congress and all previous ones were held in the Bolshoi Theater, but the Party Conference of 1940 was shifted to the new hall of the conferences of the Supreme Soviet in the Great Palace of the Kremlin.
    - a. The hall itself is divided into two parts by a wooden barrier which separates the places occupied by the delegates from the podium where Stalin and other party leaders are seated. The rostrum is located on the delegates' side of the barrier and it appears as if there is no direct communication between it and the podium. Stalin and the other leaders enter the hall by means of a door hidden somewhere behind the podium. They have no direct contact with the delegates' part of the hall.

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- b. Stalin's box at the far end of the hall is so far from the delegates' section that a successful attempt on his life with a small firearm or hand grenade is out of the question. As a further precaution, no portfolios or parcels can be taken into the Kremlin and military personnel must leave their weapons with guards in a specially assigned room.
- c. Members of the secret police are posted all along the walls of the hall, behind every door, and even in the toilet. Undoubtedly, they are also placed in among the delegates and guests. No one is allowed to enter or leave the hall of the Congress after the beginning of a session. All are supposed to remain quietly sitting.

Dissemination of the Proceedings of the Party Congresses.

- 7. The proceedings of the Party Congresses are kept confidential. No press or radio coverage is permitted. A special press bureau of the Congress releases through TASS the texts of the official documents which must be published by all papers. Only the smallest fraction of the material from the Congress is released for publication, and the press is not permitted to comment on Congress matters. Many decisions and resolutions of the Congress remain unpublished. Some of these are brought to the attention of the Party organizations by means of secret circular letters sent out by the Central Committee.

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